

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method of constructing a ~~[[hard]]~~ "hard" suitcase ~~characterised~~ characterized by forming a shaped base portion ~~[(1)]~~ and a shaped lid portion ~~[(2)]~~ from a plastics material of such characteristic that the portions ~~[(1,2)]~~ retain their intended shape, and attaching to each of said portions the respective zipped portions ~~[(16A, 16B)]~~ of a zip fastener arrangement ~~[(16)]~~ by a stitching operation involving a securing thread ~~[(35)]~~.

2. (Currently Amended) A method of constructing a ~~frame-less~~ frameless ~~[[hard]]~~ "hard" suitcase ~~characterised~~ characterized by the steps of forming a base portion ~~[(1)]~~ and a lid portion ~~[(2)]~~ from a material of such characteristic that the portions retain their formed shape, and attaching to each of said portions ~~[(1,2)]~~ the respective zipped portions ~~[(16A, 16B)]~~ of a zip fastener arrangement ~~[(16)]~~ by a stitching operation involving a securing thread ~~[(35)]~~.

3. (Currently Amended) A method of constructing a ~~frame-less~~ frameless ~~[[hard]]~~ "hard" curvilinear suitcase ~~characterised~~ characterized by the steps of forming a tray like base portion ~~[(10)]~~ and a tray like lid portion ~~[(2)]~~ from a material of such characteristics that the base and lid portions retain their intended curvilinear shape, and attaching to the free edge regions ~~[(13,14)]~~ of the walls of said tray like portions ~~[(1,2)]~~ by a stitching operation using a thread ~~[(35)]~~ the respective fastener forming sections ~~[(16A, 16B)]~~ of a zip fastener arrangement ~~[(16)]~~ for enabling the base and lid portions ~~[(1,2)]~~ to be retained in a suitcase closed condition.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method of constructing a suitcase as claimed in claim 1, ~~[(2-or-3,)]~~ and ~~characterised~~ characterized by providing a capability of increasing the storage volume of the case.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method as claimed in claim 4, ~~characterised~~ characterized in that means, for enabling said increase in the closed volume of the suitcase includes a Zip fastener arrangement ~~[(25)]~~.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method as claimed in claim 5, and ~~characterised~~ characterized in that the zip fastener arrangement ~~[(25)]~~ is a two part Zip fastener arrangement of which a first Zip part ~~[(25B)]~~ is associated with the Zip fastener arrangement ~~[(16)]~~ involved with opening and closing of the case and a second Zip part ~~[(25A)]~~ is connected with the lid portion ~~[(2)]~~ of the case.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method as claimed in claim 6, and ~~characterised~~ characterized by the provision of beading/piping between the zip part ~~[(25B)]~~ and the fastener ~~[(16)]~~.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method as claimed in claim 6 ~~[[or 7]]~~, and ~~characterised~~ characterized in that a first section of the first Zip part ~~[(25A)]~~ stitched to the suitcase lid portion ~~[(2)]~~, and the second section of the first Zip part ~~[(25A)]~~ is secured to the first zip section of the second zip fastener part ~~[(16B)]~~ whose second section is secured to the suitcase base portion ~~[(1)]~~.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method as claimed in claim 6, ~~[[7 or 8]]~~ and ~~characterised~~ characterized in that the extent of closed volume increase is determined by the overall separation width of the interconnected sections ~~[(25A, 25B)]~~ of the first and second Zip parts of the part Zip fastener arrangement ~~[(25)]~~.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method as claimed in claim 9 and ~~characterised~~ characterized in that a gusset forming strip ~~[(26)]~~ is provided between the adjoining sections of the first and second Zip fastener parts ~~[(25A, 25B)]~~, and in which the overall increase in the closed volume of the suitcase is determined by the width of the gusset.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method as claimed in ~~any one of claims 1 to 10~~ claim 1, and ~~characterised~~ characterized by the step of covering ~~in/encapsulating~~ the edge regions of the zip fastener sections ~~[(16A, 25A)]~~ stitched to the base and lid portions ~~[(1, 2)]~~ by a cover strip ~~[(30)]~~ that is secured to the associated base and lid portions ~~[(1, 2)]~~ by the stitching operation involved in securing the associated Zip fastener sections/strips to the base and lid sections of the case.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The method as claimed in claim 11 and ~~characterised~~ characterized in that the cover strip ~~[[30]]~~ includes a length of ~~[[a]]~~ an S cross-sectioned plastics/rubber strip into which is inserted the associated Zip fastener section ~~[(16A, 25A)]~~ so as to produce a layered formation including a layer of plastics/rubber material ~~[(33)]~~ immediately adjacent the associated case edge portion, the associated section of a stiffening rib ~~[(14, 14)]~~ and an outer layer ~~[(34)]~~ of plastics/rubber.

13. (Currently Amended) A suitcase construction including a base portion ~~[(10)]~~ and a lid portion ~~[(2)]~~, and lid portions being formed of such material that the portions retain their intended shape ~~whilst~~ while at the same time enabling the attachment by a stitching operation of at least one Zip fastener arrangement ~~[(16)]~~ for the purposes of enabling closure of the case.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The suitcase as claimed in claim 13, and ~~characterised~~ characterized in that two sets of floor engaging support members ~~[(23, 24)]~~, there being a set being provided one to each of two transverse surfaces of the suitcase whereby the case can be stood on a support surface in one or the other of two orientations.

15. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The suitcase as claimed in claim 14, and ~~characterised~~ characterized by means whereby the volume of the case is expandable.

16. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The suitcase as claimed in ~~[[Claim]]~~ claim 15, ~~characterised~~ characterized in that the expandability is achieved by providing a two part Zip fastener arrangement ~~[(25)]~~ of which a first Zip part ~~[(25B)]~~ is associated with the Zip fastener arrangement ~~[(16)]~~ involved the closing of the case and of which a second Zip part ~~[(25A)]~~ is associated with the expandability of the case.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The suitcase as claimed in claim 16, and ~~characterised~~ characterized in that the second Zip part ~~[(25A)]~~ is interposed between the lid second ~~[(2)]~~ of the case and the section ~~[(16B)]~~ of the Zip fastener arrangement associated with the closure of the case.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The suitcase as claimed in ~~claim any one of claims 13 to 17~~ claim 13, and ~~characterised~~ characterized in that elements of one such set are provided upon the base portion ~~[[1]]~~ and incorporate wheels/rolls ~~[(19)]~~ whereby the case is rendered towable, and in which at least one other element ~~[(23)]~~ of this set is located on the lid portion ~~[(2)]~~, the arrangement being such as to provide a stable support for the case when not being towed.

19. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]]~~ The suitcase as claimed in ~~any one of claims 13 to 18~~ claim 13, and ~~characterised~~ characterized by that side of the base portion that is opposite to the wheels/rolls is provided with a case carrying handle ~~[(21)]~~ and a retractable towing means ~~[(20)]~~.